



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR

# Sign Plan Check to Permit Issuance

CITY OF SAN DIEGO DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
1222 FIRST AVENUE, MS 301, SAN DIEGO, CA 92101

CALL (619) 446-5300 FOR APPOINTMENTS AND (619) 446-5000 FOR INFORMATION.

INFORMATION  
BULLETIN

**111**

August 2003

## I. SIGN PERMIT

A sign permit is required for any sign installed or altered except for those signs specifically exempted in Section 129.0803 of the Land Development Code.

A sign permit is required for each sign at each location. The sign permit is transferable to a new owner or lessee.

The sign is issued a permit once the application and plans have been reviewed and approved for compliance with all requirements of the Land Development Code.

A Sign Permit is not required for the following signs or activities:

- (a) Changing the copy of a sign or maintenance of a sign that does not involve structural or electrical changes;
- (b) Interior signs, except for theater lobby signs;
- (c) Public utility and safety signs that are required by law;
- (d) Signs that are required by law, other than public utility and safety signs, that do not exceed the minimum dimensions specified by law;
- (e) Real estate signs that are not illuminated;
- (f) Construction site signs that are not illuminated;
- (g) Nameplate identification signs and combination name plates and address signs with letters that do not exceed 3 inches in height, are not illuminated, and do not exceed 4 square feet in area;
- (h) Accessory warning signs that provide warnings such as "no parking," "watch dogs," and "security service" that are not illuminated, do not exceed 12 square feet in area, and do not project over a public right-of-way;
- (i) Window signs;
- (j) Signs required by the Fire Department to designate fire lanes;
- (k) Tablets, memorials, and cornerstones that are built into the walls of a building, and provide information such as the name of the building and the date of construction;
- (l) bulletin boards for charitable or religious organizations provided that the signs do not exceed 16 square feet in area, do not project over a public right-of-way, and are not illuminated; and
- (m) Temporary on-site banners, streamers, and pennants.

A sign permit will include authorization for any electrical work within the sign. A sign sticker will be issued for each sign for which a permit is issued. The sticker must be placed on the sign and maintained in a legible state.

## Sections of the Land Development Code and other documents referenced in this Information Bulletin

- Section 113.0103
- Section 129.0801 through 129.0814
- Section 142.1201 through 142.1291
- General Application, DS-3032

For specific information on sign permits, expiration of sign permits, extension of time for sign permits, stickers, and exemptions for sign permits refer to Section 129.0801 through 129.0814 of the Land Development Code. Please call Development Services at 446-5000 for more information. You may also call (619) 446-5300 to schedule an appointment with Development and Permit Information on the Third floor of the Development Services Center.

## II. SIGN DEFINITIONS

The definition of a sign means any identification, description, illustration, or device, illuminated or non-illuminated, that is visible from a public place or is located on private property and exposed to the public and which directs attention to a product, place, activity, person, institution, business, or solicitation, including any permanently installed or situated merchandise with the exception of window displays and any emblem, painting, banner, pennant, placard or temporary sign designed to advertise, identify or convey information.

Definitions for the different types of signs are contained in Section 113.0103 of the Land Development Code.

## III. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR A SIGN PERMIT

The following is a list of items required for a complete sign plan check.

1. All projects must have a completed General Application (DS-3032) accompanied by a copy of the contractor's worker's compensation and/or an owner-builder form. California law requires that every permit applicant supply specific information and certain declarations regarding the proposed work.

Printed on recycled paper. This information is available in alternative formats for persons with disabilities.

To request this document in alternative format, call (619) 446-5446 or (800) 735-2929 (TT).

Be sure to see us on the World Wide Web at [www.san-diego.gov/development-services](http://www.san-diego.gov/development-services)

DS-5111 (08-03)

Refer to the back of the application for assistance in filling out the form.

2. Two copies of a site plan must be provided and must include the following information:

- a. Dimensioned property lines
- b. Adjacent streets, curbs, sidewalks, and alleys
- c. The existing building footprint. Note: First and second stories, the dimensions of exterior walls and their distance to adjacent property lines.
- d. The existing and proposed sign(s).
- e. A north arrow

3. Two copies of an elevation plan are required and must provide the following information:

- a. The location of each sign
- b. The dimensions of the signs
- c. Sign copy
- d. Tenant frontage for wall signs
- e. Include the connection details/attachment methods, the footing details, and in some cases a structural design is required.

Illustrations of the different types of elevation plans and a site plan are provided to use as samples on pages 3 through 6 of this information bulletin.

For your convenience a copy of the "Minimum Intake Standards Checklist is provided in Section VIII.

#### IV. SIGN REGULATIONS

The sign ordinance has been written to provide comprehensive regulations for signs in San Diego. The general development regulations regarding primary signs including wall, ground, projecting and roof signs and secondary signs are contained in Sections 142.1201 through 142.1291 in the San Diego Municipal Code. For assistance you may call (619) 446-5000 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

#### V. OPTIONS FOR SERVICE

For your convenience there are several options for applying for a sign permit. One option is to schedule an appointment by calling (619) 446-5300.

You may also choose to utilize our two (2) work day turnaround option. For this you must come to the Third floor of the Development Services Center to the check-in counter and have your plans reviewed for a completeness check. You may leave your plans and the department's goal is to return them to you within two (2) working days.

Another option is for you to request your permit by fax. For this you must fax in **a legible and complete set of plans**, an application and a copy of your

worker's compensation and/or owner builder form and a credit card authorization to (619) 236-7687. You will be contacted when a plan check has been completed. For more information on permit by fax call (619) 446-5000.

The hours of operation for the Development Services Center are 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Friday.

#### VI. SIGN PERMIT FEES

Sign Permit fees are listed in Table 1 on page 7.

#### VII. AFTER THE PERMIT IS ISSUED.

After the permit is issued and the construction of the sign(s) begins, the following inspections must be scheduled:

1. Footing for ground signs
2. Special Inspections:

An electrical special inspection is required for components that are not listed as previously approved. This requires no additional paper work however an inspection fee is involved.

Pole and/or projecting signs, require SPECIAL INSPECTION AGREEMENTS for all welded connections. This involves completing and filing all required documents, however, no inspection fees are charged.

3. Final.

You may schedule inspections by phoning the City's Automated Phone Inspection Line at (858) 581-7111.

The inspection line is available seven days a week between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. The inspection line allows you to schedule inspections up to five days in advance. You may obtain the inspector's name and phone number, leave a voice mail for the inspector, and obtain the status of the inspection.

One of the approved sets of plans will be maintained at the site. The sign permit is active for 180 days and needs to have the final inspection within the 180 day period.

**Wall signs in Commercial and Industrial Zones**

A wall sign is any sign, or any sign copy area, that is on or attached to a structure of any part of that structure. The sign copy is parallel to the structure and visible from the public-right-of-way.

Wall signs are permitted alone or in a combination with other signs, however the square footage of the

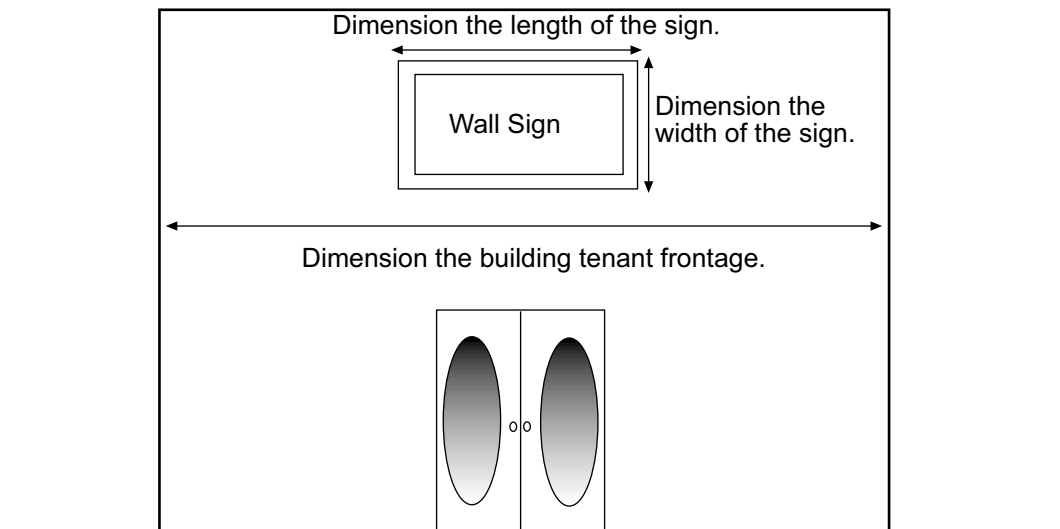
wall sign is decreased by the use of other signs.

A sample elevation view of a wall sign is provided below in Illustration 1.

For specific information on the general regulations, locational regulations, and maximum square footage permitted for wall signs, see San Diego Municipal Code, Section 142.1225.

### Illustration 1

#### Sample Wall Sign



**Ground Signs in Commercial and Industrial Zones.**

A ground sign is any sign that is supported by up-rights, braces or poles and is in or on the ground. This includes poster panels, painted bulletins, signs on fences, and signs on structures other than buildings and canopies.

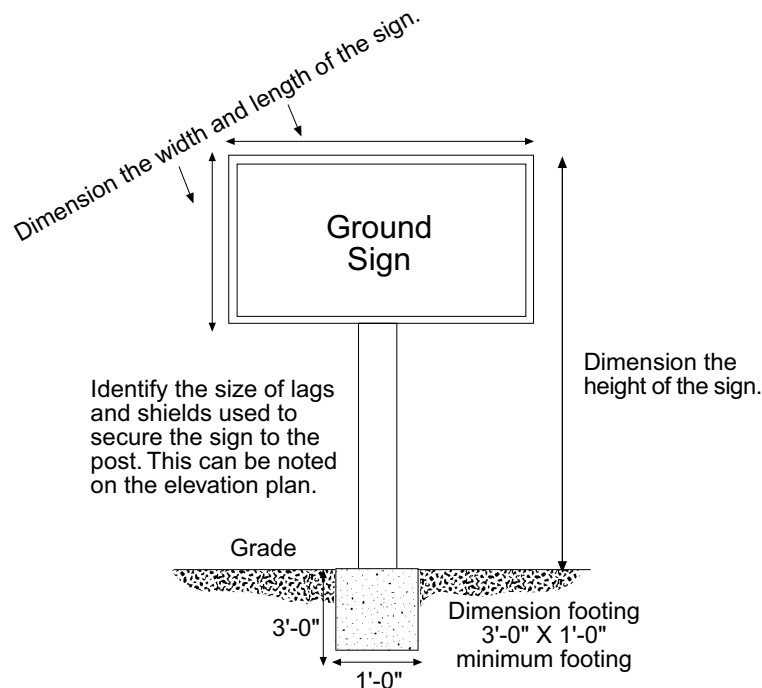
One ground sign is permitted for each premises with accessible street frontage; no minimum street frontage is required.

Ground signs are not permitted to exceed a height of 3'-0" within a visibility area.

A sample elevation view of a ground sign is provided below in Illustration 2.

For specific information on the general regulations, locational regulations, maximum height, and maximum square footage for ground signs see San Diego Municipal Code, Section 142.1240.

**Illustration 2**  
**Sample Ground Sign**



**Projecting Signs in Commercial and Industrial Zones.**

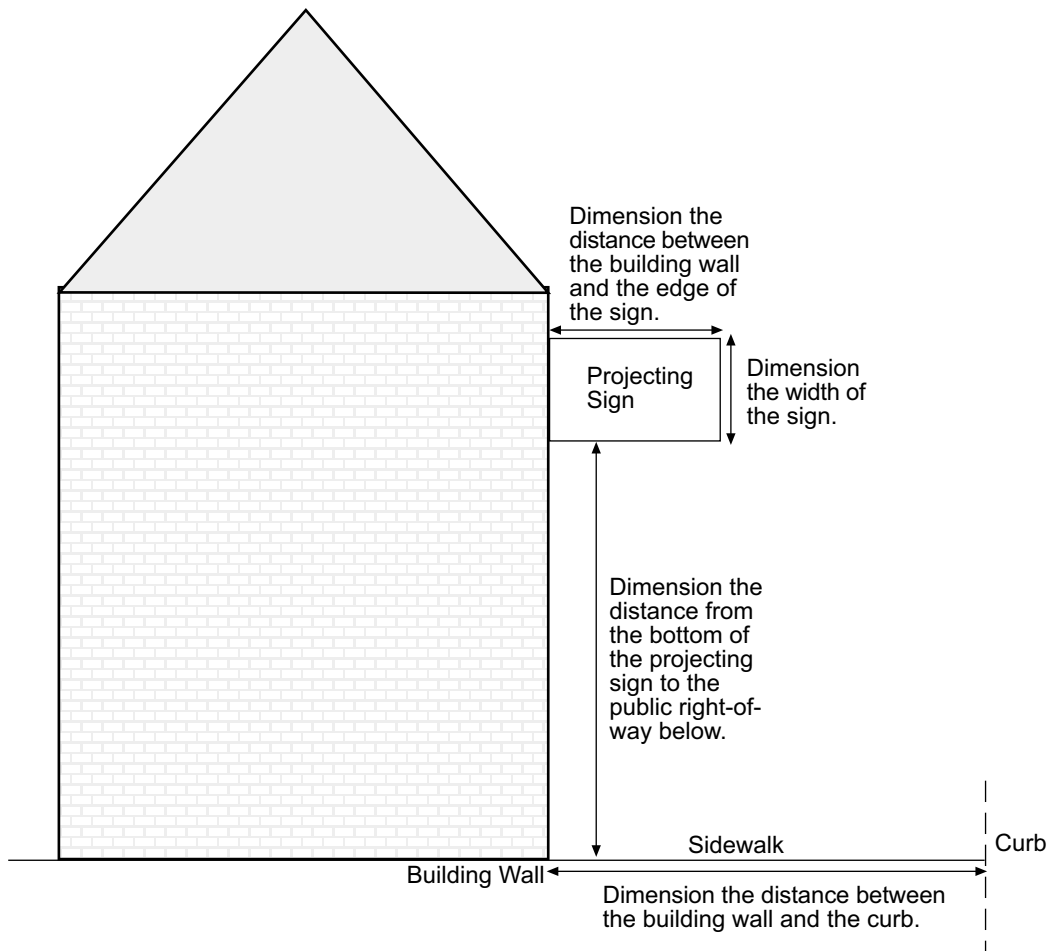
A projecting sign is any sign, other than a wall sign, that is attached to the wall and projects more than 18" from the building wall.

One projecting sign is permitted for each premises with accessible street frontage. Projecting signs are not permitted in addition to a ground sign or a

roof sign, nor are they permitted in the coastal zones. A sample elevation view of a projecting sign is provided below in Illustration 3.

For specific information on the general regulations, locational regulations, maximum height, and maximum square footage for projecting signs see San Diego Municipal Code, Section 142.1230.

**Illustration 3**  
**Sample Projecting Sign**



**Roof Signs in Commercial and Industrial Zones.**

A roof sign is any sign that is attached to the roof and projects above the roof or roof eave.

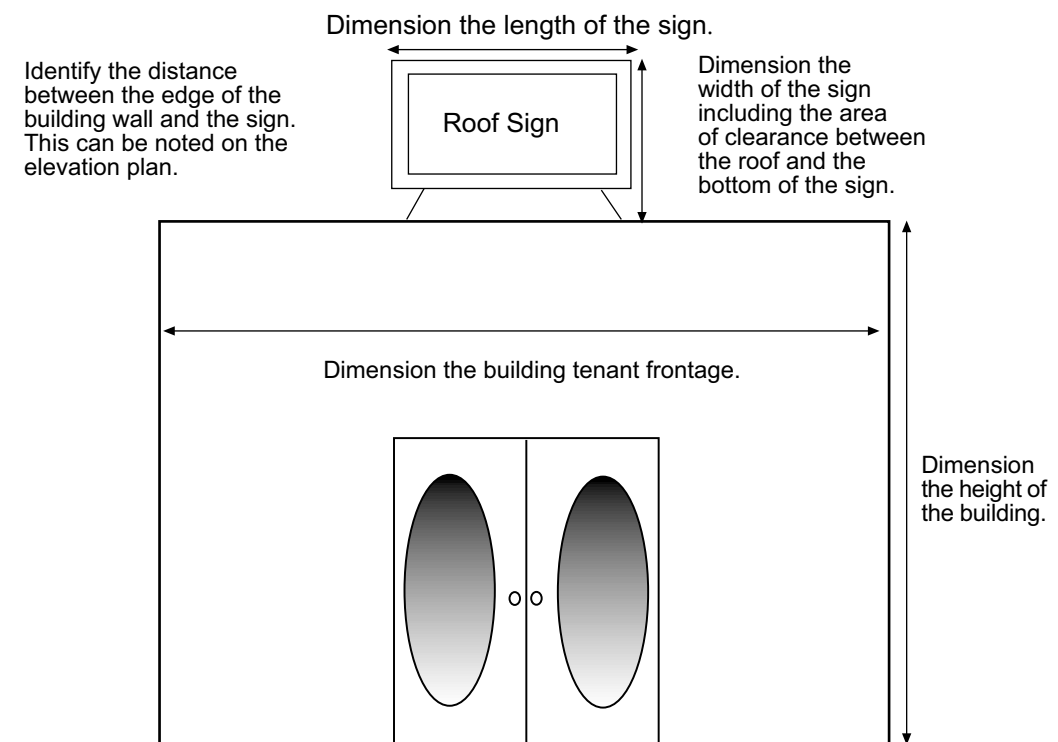
One roof sign is permitted for each premises with accessible street frontage. Roof signs are not permitted in addition to a ground sign or projecting sign, nor are they permitted in the coastal zones.

A sample elevation view of a roof sign is provided below in Illustration 4.

For specific information on the general regulations, locational regulations, maximum height, and maximum square footage for roof signs see San Diego Municipal Code, Section 142.1235.

### Illustration 4

#### Sample Roof Sign



**Table 1: Sing Permit Fees**

<b><u>TYPE OF SIGN</u></b>	<b><u>PROPOSED FEE</u></b>
Awning, Directional or Wall Sign, Non-Electric	\$140
Awning, Directional or Wall Sign, Non-Electric (2-3 signs)	\$250 per group
Awning, Directional or Wall Sign, Non-Electric (4-10 signs)	\$370 per group
Awning, Directional or Wall Sign, Non-Electric (11+ signs)	\$490 per group
<b>Self Certification for Minor Signs: Non- Electrical Wall Signs no greater than 75 sq. ft. in area and 18" in projection off the building fascia, Awning Signs, Directional Signs no greater than 8' high and 12 sq. ft in area</b>	
Self Certification: Awning, Directional or Wall Sign, Non-Electric	\$130
Self Certification: Awning, Directional or Wall Sign, Non-Electric (2-3 signs)	\$220 per group
Self Certification: Awning, Directional or Wall Sign, Non-Electric (4-10 signs)	\$270 per group
Self Certification: Awning, Directional or Wall Sign, Non-Electric (11+ signs)	\$310 per group
Banner Signs per Banner District	\$160 per banner district
freeway Signs	\$340 each
Ground/Roof/Projecting Signs	\$250 each
Ground/Roof/Projecting Signs (2-3 signs)	\$380 per group
ground/Roof/Projecting Signs (4-10 signs)	\$670 per group
Ground/Roof/Projecting Signs (11+ signs)	\$1,050 per group
Master Plan Sign Check	\$80
Replacement Sticker	\$40
Rework of any Existing Ground Sign	\$160 each
Rework of any Existing Ground Sign (2-3 signs)	\$300
Rework of any Existing Ground Sign (4-10 signs)	\$580
Rework of any Existing Ground Sign (11+ signs)	\$840
Wall Sign, Electric	\$170
Wall Sign, Electric (2-3 signs)	\$300 per group
Wall Sign, Electric (4-10 signs)	\$670 per group
Wall Sign, Electric (11+ signs)	\$1,100 per group
Special Inspection per Project	\$90
Subdivision Directional Sign Permit	\$1,000
<b>Maximum fees per project will not exceed \$1,200 where application is by made at the same time, except freeway oriented signs. Penalties and Special Inspections are not counted toward the limitation.</b>	